Chapter 60
_____

The Optative
_____

60.1 There are four "Moods" of a verb - the Indicative, Subjunctive, Optative, and the Imperative. These are described as "finite", because the endings "define" the person doing the action (First - I, we; Second - you; Third - he, she, it, they) Sometimes the Infinite is also classed as a Mood, although it may be better to class it as a Verbal noun.

So far we have dealt with the Indicative Mood - used to indicate facts, make definite statements, or to ask questions, and with the Subjunctive - used when there is an element of doubt, and with the Imperative - used to give orders

Now we come to the Optative - used mainly to express a wish that something may, or may not, happen.

In the New Testament, the most frequently-occurring Optative is μὴ γένοιτο = "may it not happen", with the feeling "Oh Please, Please, may it not happen." translated in the KJV as "God forbid"

The Optative has five tenses - Present, Future, Aorist, Perfect, and Future Perfect.

60.2 Uses of the Optative

1. **To express a wish** that something may or may not happen. Because the Optative is expressing a wish for something to happen, or not happen, when used in direct discourse it refers to future time. Therefore the tenses do not indicate points along a time-line, but the state of the action. The Present tense has a continuing or repeating sense "May something always happen". The Aorist tense refers to a simple action "May something happen (once)". The Perfect refers to something being completed, with a permanent result "May they be in the state of having done something."

       e.g. μὴ γένοιτο   may it not happen   By no means !   God forbid !

2. The **Potential Optative**, used with ἄν to express the opinion of the writer or speaker as to the future possibility or likelihood of an action. It may be translated by may, might, can, must, would, should etc. The Potential Optative may also be used in purpose clauses, result clauses, causal clauses, object clauses after verbs of fearing or effort, and dependent sentences.

3. **To express a command or exhortation** less forcefully than the Imperative.

4. Used without ἄν in relative sentences, conditional sentences, purpose clauses, after secondary tenses in purpose clauses and clauses of fearing.

5. In **Indirect Discourse** (see Chapter 61), the Optative may be used to represent the Indicative or Subjunctive after secondary tenses. **Secondary**, or **Historic, tenses** are those used for past time - the Imperfect, Pluperfect, and Aorist expressing past time. Primary, or Principal tenses, are those used for present time - the Present, Perfect - expressing a present state of affairs, and those expressing future time - the Future and the Future Perfect.

When the Optative is used in indirect discourse the tenses do imply a period in time. This is the condition in which one might meet a Future Optative e.g. "He said that he wished that **they would do** something"

    e.g. ἐφοβούμην μὴ γένοιτο   I was afraid (that) it might happen (lest it happen)
         ἐφοβούμην μὴ οὐ γένοιτο   I was afraid (that) it might not happen (lest it not happen)

60.3 The tenses of the **Optative :** Only Aorist and Present Optatives occur in the GNT.

Note the characteristic -οι- of the Optative (replaced by -αι- in the Aorist)
Note also that there is no augment on the Aorist.

Person	Present Active	Present Mid/Pass.	Aorist Active	Aorist Middle	Aorist Passive
1	STEM-οιμι	STEM-οίμην	STEM-σαιμι	STEM-σαίμην	STEM-θείην
2	STEM-οις	STEM-οιο	STEM-σαις	STEM-σαιο	STEM-θείης
3	STEM-οι	STEM-οιτο	STEM-σαι	STEM-σαιτο	STEM-θείη
1	STEM-οιμεν	STEM-οίμεθα	STEM-σαιμεν	STEM-σαίμεθα	STEM-θεῖμεν
2	STEM-οιτε	STEM-οισθε	STEM-σαιτε	STEM-σαισθε	STEM-θεῖτε
3	STEM-οιεν	STEM-οιντο	STEM-σαιεν	STEM-σαιντο	STEM-θεῖεν

Verbs with Second Aorists use their Aorist Stem

Person	2 Aorist Active	2 Aorist Middle	2 Aorist Passive
1	ASTEM-οιμι	ASTEM-οίμην	ASTEM-θείην
2	ASTEM-οις	ASTEM-οιο	ASTEM-θείης
3	ASTEM-οι	ASTEM-οιτο	ASTEM-θείη
1	ASTEM-οιμεν	ASTEM-οίμεθα	ASTEM-θεῖμεν
2	ASTEM-οιτε	ASTEM-οισθε	ASTEM-θεῖτε
3	ASTEM-οιεν	ASTEM-οιντο	ASTEM-θεῖεν

For the -μι verbs, using δίδωμι as an example

Person	Present Active	Present Mid/Pass.	Aorist Active	Aorist Middle	Aorist Passive
1	διδοίην	διδοίμην	δοίην	δοίμην	δοθείην
2	διδοίης	διδοῖο	δοίης	δοῖο	δοθείης
3	διδοίη	διδοῖτο	δοίη	δοῖτο	δοθείη
1	διδοῖμεν	διδοίμεθα	δοῖμεν	δοίμεθα	δοθεῖμεν
2	διδοῖτε	διδοῖσθε	δοῖτε	δοῖσθε	δοθεῖτε
3	διδοῖεν	διδοῖντο	δοῖεν	δοῖντο	δοθεῖεν

Tenses which do not appear in the GNT are given here for completeness, for when you read beyond the GNT

Person	Future Active	Future Middle	Future Passive	Future Perfect Passive
1	STEM-σοιμι	STEM-σοίμην	STEM-θησοίμην	*PSTEM*-σοίμην
2	STEM-σοις	STEM-σοιο	STEM-θήσοιο	*PSTEM*-σοιο
3	STEM-σοι	STEM-σοιτο	STEM-θήσοιτο	*PSTEM*-σοιτο
1	STEM-σοιμεν	STEM-σοίμεθα	STEM-θησοίμεθα	*PSTEM*-σοίμεθα
2	STEM-σοιτε	STEM-σοισθε	STEM-θήσοισθε	*PSTEM*-σοισθε
3	STEM-σοιεν	STEM-σοιντο	STEM-θήσοιντο	*PSTEM*-σοιντο

Perfect Active   λελυκὼς εἴην   etc. - see Chapter 66 for the Optative of εἰμί

Perfect Middle / Passive   λελυμένος εἴην   etc. - see Chapter 66 for the Optative of εἰμί

Practice - until you can read and translate easily

1. τινὲς δὲ ἀπὸ τῆς Ἀσίας Ἰουδαῖοι,
   οὓς ἔδει ἐπὶ σοῦ παρεῖναι καὶ
   κατηγορεῖν εἴ τι ἔχοιεν πρὸς ἐμέ . . .

   Some Jews from Asia, who ought
   to be present before you and bring charges
   if they have something against me.
   (Acts 24:19)

2. ἀλλ' εἰ καὶ πάσχοιτε διὰ δικαιοσύνην,
   μακάριοι. τὸν δὲ φοβον αὐτῶν
   μὴ φοβηθῆτε μηδὲ ταραχθήτε.

   But even if you do suffer for righteousness,
   (you are) blessed. Neither fear them
   nor be troubled. *(1 Peter 3:14)*

3. ὁ δὲ Παῦλος *(εἶπεν)*, Εὐξαίμην ἂν τῷ θεῷ
   καὶ ἐν ὀλίγῳ καὶ ἐν μεγάλῳ
   οὐ μόνον σὲ ἀλλὰ καὶ πάντας
   τοὺς ἀκούοντάς μου σήμερον γενέσθαι
   τοιούτους ὁποῖους καὶ ἐγώ εἰμι.

   Paul said, "Would to God that,
   for small as for great,
   not only you but also all
   hearing me today might become
   such as I am. *(Acts 26:29)*

(εὐξαίμην = *Optative of* εὔχομαι - *I pray,* ὁποῖους = *Accusative of* ὁποῖος - "of such a kind as")
   (εὐξαιμην ἂν τῷ θεῷ - *"I could pray to God . . ." or "Would to God . . . "*)

4. αὐτὸς δὲ ὁ κύριος τῆς εἰρήνης δῴη ὑμῖν
   τὴν εἰρήνην διὰ παντὸς ἐν παντὶ τρόπῳ.

   May the Lord of peace himself give you
   peace through all times in all ways.
   (2 Thess. 3:16)

5. ναί, ἀδελφέ, ἐγώ σου ὀναίμην
   ἐν κυρίῳ.

   Yes, brother, I wish to enjoy (something)
   of you in the Lord. *(Philem. v.20)*

    (ὀναίμην = *Second Aorist Optative Middle of* ὀνίνημι - *I benefit, enjoy*)

6. εἶπεν δὲ Μαριάμ, Ἰδοὺ ἡ δούλη κυρίου,   And Mary said, "Behold, the handmaid of the
    γένοιτό μοι κατὰ τὸ ῥῆμά σου.   Lord, let it be to me according to your word.
    (*Μαριάμ is a variant spelling of Μαρία - both derived from the Hebrew "Miriam") (Luke 1:38)*

7. ὡς δὲ ἤκουσαν τοὺς λόγους τούτους . . .   When the High Priests heard these words
    οἱ ἀρχιερεῖς διηπόρουν περὶ αὐτῶν   they were perplexed about them (and) what
    τί ἂν γένοιτο τοῦτο.   this might become (where this might lead)
    (*διηπόρουν = Imperfect of διαπορέω - I am at a loss, cannot work out) (Acts 5:24)*

8. (ὁ Φῆστος εἶπεν,) Ἀπορούμενος δὲ ἐγὼ   (Festus said,) "Being at a loss (as to) how to
   τὴν περὶ τούτων ζήτησιν   investigate (search about) these questions
    ἔλεγον εἰ βούλοιτο πορεύεσθαι   I said (asked) if he wished to travel to
    εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα κἀκεῖ κρίνεσθαι.   Jerusalem to be tried there. *(see Acts 25:20)*
  (*ἀπορούμενος = Present Participle Middle of ἀπορέω - I am at a loss, can't see the way through*
   ἡ ζήτησις = question, dispute. from ζητέω - I seek)

9. Τί οὖν ἐροῦμεν ;   What then shall we say?
    ὁ νόμος (ἐστιν) ἁμαρτία ;   (That) the Law is sin ?
    μὴ γένοιτο.   God forbid!   *(Rom. 7:7)*

10. Αὐτὸς δὲ ὁ θεὸς καὶ πατὴρ ἡμῶν καὶ   May God our Father himself and
   ὁ κύριος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦς κατευθύναι   our Lord Jesus prosper our road (journey)
    τὴν ὁδὸν ἡμῶν πρὸς ὑμᾶς.   to you.   *(1 Thess. 3:11)*
    (*κατευθύναι = Aorist Optative of κατευθύνω - I straighten out, prosper a journey)*

60.4 Sentences for reading and translation

1. αὐτὸς ὁ θεὸς τῆς εἰρήνης ἁγιάσαι ὑμᾶς.   *(1 Thess. 5:23)*
2. Τί οὖν, ἁμαρτήσωμεν ὅτι οὐκ ἐσμὲν ὑπὸ τοῦ νόμου ἀλλὰ ὑπὸ χαριν ;
    μὴ γένοιτο.   *(Rom. 6:15)*
3. ὁ δὲ κύριος κατευθύναι ὑμῶν τὰς καρδίας εἰς τὴν ἀγάπην τοῦ θεοῦ. *(2 Thess. 3:5)*
   (*κατευθύναι = Aorist Optative of κατευθύνω - I straighten out , prosper a journey)*
4. νόμον οὖν καταργοῦμεν διὰ τῆς πίστεως ; μὴ γένοιτο.   *(Rom. 3:31)*
5. ὁ δὲ Μιχαὴλ ὁ ἀρχάγγελος, ὅτε τῷ διαβόλῳ διακρινόμενος, . . .
    εἶπεν, Ἐπιτιμήσαι σοι κύριος.   *(Jude v.9)*
       (*Μιχαὴλ ὁ ἀρχάγγελος - Michael the archangel)*
6. Λέγω οὖν, Μὴ ἀπώσατο ὁ θεὸς τὸν λαὸν αὐτοῦ ; μὴ γένοιτο.   *(Rom. 11:1)*
     (*ἀπώσατο = Aorist Middle of ἀπωθέω - I push away, reject)*
7. τινὲς δὲ . . . τῶν φιλοσόφων . . . ἔλεγον,
  Τί ἂν θέλοι ὁ σπερμολόγος οὗτος λέγειν ;   *(Acts 17:18)*
    (*ὁ φιλόσοφος - philosopher   ὁ σπερμολόγος - babbler)*
8. ἐμοὶ δὲ μὴ γένοιτο καυχᾶσθαι εἰ μὴ ἐν τῷ σταυρῷ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν
  Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, δι' οὗ ἐμοὶ κόσμος ἐσταύρωται κἀγὼ κόσμῳ. *(Gal. 6:14)*
9. αὐτοὶ δὲ ἐπλήσθησαν ἀνοίας καὶ διελάλουν πρὸς ἀλλήλους
    τί ἂν ποιήσαιεν τῷ Ἰησοῦ.   *(Luke 6:11)*
        (*ἡ ἀνοία - wrath, rage, fury, stupidity   διαλαλέω - I discuss, talk about)*
10. ἔλεος ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνην καὶ ἀγάπην πληθυνθείη.   *(Jude v.2)*

60.5 Writing Practice : Write the Greek text several times, while saying aloud : Philippians 4:4-6
    Χαίρετε ἐν κυρίῳ πάντοτε ·   Rejoice in the Lord at all times;
       πάλιν ἐρῶ, χαίρετε.   Again I will say, "Rejoice!"
    τὸ ἐπιεικὲς ὑμῶν γνωσθήτω   Let your gentleness be known
       πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις.   to all men.
    ὁ κύριος ἐγγύς.   The Lord (is) near.
       μηδὲν μεριμνᾶτε,   Worry about nothing

60.6 There is no New Testament Passage for reading and translation.
The Practice Sentences have given a good over-view of the uses of the Optative.

60.7 Vocabulary to learn

κατευθύνω	I straighten out , prosper a journey)
πάρειμι	I am present, near, at hand
πληθύνω	I fill, fulfil
ταράσσω	I disturb, agitate
τὸ δεῖπνον	supper, dinner, feast
ὁ τρόπος	way, manner, way of life